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ABSTRACT

This paper briefly reviews the purposes, associated problems, and possible methods of evaluating college administrators. It is noted that there are essentially two possible purposes for administrator evaluation: to increase the efficiency of the college, in which case the emphasis must be placed on the function of the position, or to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the incumbent administrator. It is recommended that evaluations be used to increase efficiency of the college, and secondarily to apprise the individual of his strengths and weaknesses. Some practical suggestions include maintaining an awareness that evaluation will undoubtedly produce tensions, that strict confidentiality must be maintained, and that administrative ratings should be signed by both the rater and the ratee. Use of standardized rating instruments is not suggested since such instruments are generally not able to reflect the unique situations and circumstances of different institutions. It is recommended that each administrator develop a series of short- and long-range objectives and the means by which he plans to reach them. This activity should be performed in cooperation with his immediate superior, who should be his eventual rater. Development of an effective rating system is a time-consuming affair. The ERIC system is recommended as a source of assistance which may provide evaluation developers with ideas adaptable to their situation. (JDS)

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tallahassee community college

April 4, 1977

EVALUATION OF ADMINISTRATORS

I have been asked to speak today for a few minutes on the subject of "Strategies for Implementing an Evaluation System." Let me speak first of what we, at a 2900 student community college, have learned and the trials and errors we have experienced, then we may open the discussion for questions and hopefully some answers.

Before implementing an evaluation system there are a number of questions which must be addressed and to which answers must be found, lest, like the proverbial cowboy we lean onto our horse and ride off in all directions.

1. Is the purpose of implementing an evaluation system to increase the efficiency of the college or that of the individual occupying the administrative position being evaluated?

2. Will the results of the evaluation be used to reward or replace the admininstrator?

3. Were the pressures which brought about the evaluation system from outside the college or the result of inner-college politics?

If the purpose of the proposed evaluation is to increase the efficiency of the college the emphasis must be upon the function of the position and this precludes use of an universal standardized instrument for all administrative positions. The incumbent must work together with the designated rater to detail the position functions as they are and as they plan to be in the future. Relationships between this position and other positions must be clarified and fully coordinated with other administrators.

If the evaluation is of the incumbent then the results must affect him personally and will necessarily be subjective for which no apology need be made. In this instance one might make judicious use of input from those immediately below him in the administrative chain. They should be able to comment on his clarity of direction and leadership qualities. If the results of this evaluation are good, what type reward is planned for the administrator? A friend of mine once remarked that, "IBM has a new incentive plan: Meet your sales quota and keep your job!" If the outcome may result in replacement of the individual you must be certain to document each step you have taken over a period of time to advise the administrator of the imminence of losing his job.

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Self-evaluation might make one reflect upon his mode of operations compared with a personal ideal but the changes effected by such a self-appraisal are often either never implemented or lost when the individual soon reverts to type. To be a permanent change, it must be reinforced by contact with others.

It must be recognized that any form of evaluation is going to produce tensions both within the individual and within the organization. (A college reported that one administrator refused to see his evaluator viv-a-vis and another would see him only in the presence of his lawyer!) Severe anxiety may result if the evaluation is tied to a pay raise. It is probably far better to use evaluations as instruments to increase the efficiency of the college and secondarily to apprise the individual of his strengths and weaknesses.

On the note of confidentiality, it must be remembered that the fewer people who know of the rating the better acceptance it will have. As an example at our campus, student ratings of teachers are sent from the classroom directly to my office where I collect and maintain them until after grade reports have been sent to students at the end of the term. I process the rating cards through our computer and have the printouts returned directly to me. I then send them to the individual teacher through his academic division chairman. Neither the college president nor any of the deans have access to these ratings and they are a matter between the teacher and department chairman to whom he reports and who recommends employment or discharge of his teachers. Similar security should surround ratings of administrators.

I believe all ratings should be signed by both the rator and the ratee (although our student ratings of teachers are presently, and historically have been, anonymous). It is impossible to ask an anonymous rator for a clarification of a rating or remark or to consult with him to effect a measure of self-improvement. We are all either professionals, or studying to be, and if we haven't the courage of our convictions we should change occupations. Education is no haven for the morally irresponsible or weak; it is a crucible wherein we hope to forge character - mostly by personal example.

One must consider the processes which brought about the desire or need for a system of administrator evaluations. In the case of California colleges, such a procedure was a requirement from the legislature. However in many states, Florida for one (except for college presidents) the mandate must come from within the institution. Since the measurable product of an educational institution is often grade reports and since some form of grading is a daily occurance on campus, it should not cause considerable trauma when one suggests rating or grading teachers and administrators.

Unfortunately, rating of administrators often results from faculty attitudes along the line of, "If I'm going to be rated, he's going to be rated too." Such illogic may be followed to the final absurdity of the college president being rated by students, many of whom have never seen him. A joint committee of faculty and administrators developing a rating system should tend to eliminate such undesirable motives.

In May of 1975 our college president sent a letter of appointment and request to three faculty members and one administrative dean asking them to develop a system of evaluation of administrators. My services were made available to them as a resource person. We hammered out an instrument which was not too well done but could be easily administered and evaluated by the computer as is done with faculty ratings. After approval by the Faculty Senate and Administrative Council it was presented to the Board of Trustees for their concurrence.

The Board accepted neither the instrument nor the theory. They made it quite clear that they hired the president, they fired the president and they would rate the president. (Florida Board of Education Rules stipulate that Boards of Trustees must evaluate college presidents at the time of their contract renewal - 4 years at our college.) They further stated they did not favor faculty rating of administrators since there is insufficient contact between the administrator and the faculty upon which to draw valid conclusions. Administrators are on annual contract which must be approved, by individual name, by the Board of Trustees and they vest their powers of evaluation to the Office of the President.

Personally, if a standardized instrument must be used in order to provide comparisons between positions and/or colleges - and I do not approve of the concept of standardized evaluation instruments - I would recommend the one developed, and copywrited, by Professor Tyrus Hillway at the University of Northern Colorado. His is a two-part instrument with the first part evaluating the personal and professional qualities of the administrator and the second part relating to the methods used by the administrator in work performance. In all there are only about twenty questions.

We at TCC are now approaching the problem from a different tack. I believe the president will rate his deans and those others of us who report directly to him. The deans will rate those who report directly to them with the academic division directors rated by the dean of instruction. I also see some form of self or peer evaluation which would reflect the individual's abilities as a team member. In larger institutions a system is used whereby seven persons are named as possible rators and the ratee deletes two names. the remaining five make their evaluations and the top and bottom evaluations are deleted with the final evaluation based on the central three. I feel this is wasteful of the time of at least two rators which would tend to make their work less than precise and the end result is probably so bland as to be meaningless.

As an implementation strategy, each individual administrator could, perhaps over the summer period, develop a series of short and long range objectives and the means by which he plans to reach them. He could work these out cooperatively with his immediate superior, who should be his eventual rator, in order to reach a set of reasonable objectives which would fit within the total institutional goals and benefit the administrative system. Objectives should be of three

types (1) personal, (2) organizational within his unit and (3) system-wide within the college philosophy.

At the beginning of the academic year, a formal agreement of these objectives should be reduced to writing. A preliminary rating could be made as a "dry-run" at the end of the first term or two and the instrument finalized and officially evaluated at the end of the academic year. This timing would provide input to the Board for consideration at contract renewal time. Objectives should be changed annually to reflect the changing conditions of the college and times.

It is important to recognize that development of an effective evaluation system is a time consuming affair and not to be entered into lightly. I would not recommend that a college adopt a system which is "ready-made" at some other institution. It should not fit your philosophy which should be an individual matter and it probably will not fit your administrative structure. If an outside system is forced upon your people you will be faced with resentment which will negate any good qualities of the system or value received.

Contact your local Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) for micro-fiche and hard-copy reports of administrative systems in use. ERIC has an excellent service through their Clearinghouses and will give rapid and complete services. They are one of the most efficient services we have at hand.

A word about evaluations, merit pay and collective bargaining; keep all evaluation systems away from the bargaining table. Evaluation should be considered as an internal means of organizational improvement and not made available to arbitrators who may try to tie ratings to salary emoluments. If you already have merit pay it may not be possible to maintain this separation but we have successfully managed to avoid merit pay. Bargaining is by nature an adversary proceeding and admininstrator evaluations would merely be another point of friction which would benefit no one individual and certainly not the institution.

I recently received an excellent paper on evalution of the Chief Executive Officer, or president as we know him. A copy of this paper is attached and I really believe it would be to your advantage to read it. We have given copies to our College Board of Trustees, the Leon County School Board and I made a presentation of it to a seminar of the American Association of University Administrators in Mobile, Alabama.

Dr. Harold Koontz's paper, "Holding the CEO Accountable" is really a primer for governing boards and only addresses accountability of the CEO during its final paragraphs. The author is a highly respected authority on management and has published several books on that subject.

"John Q. Public" is becoming sensitive to the role of Boards particularly when corporations or institutions get into financial or legal trouble. Boards have recently been sued for their lack of positive leadership and lack of effective evaluation procedures to ward off calamities. It behooves each of us to provide our own Boards with all possible guidance to avoid such legal entanglements.

As a member of several Boards, I find one of my most difficult problems is that of conscientiously carrying out my duties in establishing policies without becoming enmeshed in the management role; which is more properly in the realm of the Chief Executive Officer. The solution is, of course, proper delineation of responsibilities at the onset. Dr. Koontz addresses this particular problem early in his paper under the heading "Allocating Decision Making Authority."

As a point of departure, Dr. Koontz has included a sample chart which anyone could use as a model for allocating his own responsibilities by substituting his organizational headings across the top of the charts in lieu of Department Manager, Staff Specialist and Division Director then adding or deleting divisions as appropriate. Likewise, the vertical headings could be modified to reflect specific functions of the Board and of the office of the Chief Executive Officer. The result could very well be a vehicle for guidance of who should do what to whom.

"...research has shown that the most important single cause of managerial failure is inept-i.e., inappropriate delegation of authority," says Dr. Koontz. We have all experienced the desire to "do it myself" because its easier than explaining to someone else - or is it because we don't have it clear enough in our own minds to explain it to someone else? He writes of nine different types of decisions and the importance of taking our responsibilities seriously and then again he stresses verifiable objectives which can be stated in quanitative or qualitative terms and the use of target dates. He repeatedly speaks of the desirability of carefully delineating objectives.

In the remarks under "Evaluating the CEO" Dr. Koontz writes of the appraisal of managers at all levels as being one of the weakest links in management and he says that he has long considered appraisal management's Achilles' Heel. I was happy to see that he also advocates evaluating managerial performance according to two sets of standards with one set concerning the establishment and achievement of verifiable goals and the other set concerning the actual performance of the manager. This, of course, has been my premise all along; questioning whether you evaluate the individual or the position.

Those of you who are interested in developing an evaluation of the president of your college or institution might do well to take note of a study recently conducted by Dr. Barry Munitz Vice President and Dean of Faculties at the University of Houston. Dr. Munitz conducted a study from July, 1975 to April, 1976 under the guidance of the Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education, during which time he investigated presidential leadership at American colleges and universities. The result of this investigation is an excellent paper entitled "Presidential Evaluation and Assessment of Institutional Leadership" published in March of 1976. I have a copy of this or you may obtain a copy of your own by writing to Dr. Munitz.

At our college we have an evaluation system for students (grades), for faculty (faculty evaluations) for career service (annual rating reports) and will soon have one for administrators-perhaps sometime this year. If I may be of further service to you, please do not hesitate to write or call. I promise all the help I may be able to offer for I realize that the responsibility you shoulder is great. Good luck.

Archie B. Johnston

Archie B. Johnston, PhD.
Director

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